As per norms, at least 75% of the total scholarships are to be awarded to the priority disciplines.

(v) North-East Sports Festival:– The scheme of North-East Sports Festival was launched by the Department of Youth Affairs and Sports in the year 1986-87 and is being operated through the SAI.

(vi) Other main Schemes relating to the promotion of Sports activities include cash awards and Pension to Meritorious Sportspersons; National Sports Development Fund; National Sports Awards Schemes; and State Sports Academy Scheme.

(vii) Development of sports activities in the country is also catered through financial assistance to National Sports Federations by way of conducting national and international tournaments in India, participation of Indian Teams in tournaments and events abroad, provision of coaching through Indian and foreign coaches, backed-up with requisite technical support, procurement of equipments etc.

Under the 'Panchayat Yuva Khel aur Krida Abhiyan', which has received in principle approval of the Planning Commission and is being processed further, special attention will be paid to sports infrastructure and organized sports in all parts of the country, taking into consideration the special human endowments and geographical features of hill areas. The issue has also been addressed in the draft Comprehensive National Sports Policy, at present under discussion with stakeholders.

Grants for Indian Scouts and Guides

†2600. SHRI AMIR ALAM KHAN: Will the Minister of YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have sanctioned any grants for the activities of Indian Scouts and Guides;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the grants sanctioned during the last three years, State-wise;

(d) whether Government gives any preference to the youth trained by Indian Scouts and Guides while giving employment;

(e) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Yes Sir, the Ministry have sanctioned funds to Bharat Scouts and Guides for holding of various activities.

(b) and (c) The amounts released during the last three years are as under:–

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Year	Amounts
2004-05	Rs. l,00,00,000
2005-06	Rs. 1,45,00,000
2006-07	Rs. 1,10,00,000

There is no provision under the Scheme to allocate funds State-wise.

(d) to (f) No priority/concession is provided by the Union Government in regard to the employment of youth trained by the Bharat Scouts and Guides. However, the Indian Railways annually recruit Rashtrapati Awardees of Rovers and Rangers trained by the Bharat Scouts and Guides at Group C and Group D levels. Similarly, State Governments grant incentives at their level which vary from State to State.

Discontinuation of assistance by Centre

†2601. SHRI LAXMINARAYAN SHARMA: Will the Minister of YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central assistance for constructing sports infrastructure, discontinued by Central Government, is likely to be resumed; and .

(b) if not, whether States would be provided with separate funds for this purpose?

THE MINISTER OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) The Centrally Sponsored Sports Infrastructure Schemes were transferred to the State sector *w.e.f.* l.4.2005. The Ministry took up, the matter with the Planning Commission and Ministry of Finance for reviewing the decision in view of the financial constraints of States. The cost-intensive nature of certain categories of infrastructure such as synthetic surfaces etc; and the committed liability towards the already approved projects. The Planning Commission did not agree to the request stating that these schemes have been identified for transfer to States as part of the general exercise to reduce the number of Centrally Sponsored Schemes, but agreed to provide funds for the completion of ongoing projects during the Tenth Plan to the extent of the committed liability.

During the current financial year 2007-08, no funds have been provided under the erstwhile Sports Infrastructure Scheme. State Governments will have to fund the ongoing projects out of their own resources for which they can seek additional allocation of funds from the Planning Commission in their respective State Annual Plans.

With a view to addressing the huge gap in the availability of sports infrastructure, especially at the grassroots level, the Ministry have received the in-principle approval of the Planning Commission to launch a nation-wide programme entitled ‘‘Panchayat Yuva Krida Aur Khel Abhiyan’’, which aims to provide all the village and block panchayats with basic sports infrastructure in a phased manner over a period of 10 years.

The draft Comprehensive National Sports Policy also addresses this question under the rubric of ‘‘Sports for All’’, which is one of the objectives of the Revised Twenty-Point Programme issued on Gandhi Jayanti 2006.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.